

2008 Legislative Session Review

Transportation

Easing the gridlock, protecting citizens, planning for the future.

- Despite facing a \$1.8 billion deficit brought on by inflation costs and declining federal funding, we were able to keep projects on track and present a workable plan to replace the SR 520 floating bridge.



- Improving safety and relieving congestion across the state are always top priorities when working on the transportation budget, and this year was no different.



- We kept the state's two mega projects on schedule. Construction begins this year on the Alaskan Way Viaduct, and six projects totaling \$915 million are already underway. They will provide real benefits to drivers, transit riders, and freight moving to and around Seattle.

In the Budget:

- In order to protect kids from harmful chemicals in schools, the Legislature funded a program that will reduce the use of pesticides by focusing on preventative methods, rather than chemical treatments. This program was unfortunately vetoed by the Governor, but I will continue working on it next year.



- I was also able to allocate new funding in the Education budget to create a position that will oversee language programs in state schools. The World Languages Director in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction would be the one point of contact for the diverse languages that are offered.
- This session I also secured \$80,000 to challenge the state Department of Ecology's experts to come up with a new way of collecting fees from businesses that release toxic industrial pollution into our air, land, and water.



Where's my Ememo?

Due to state laws governing elections, this will be the last public newsletter or email I'll be able to send until after the November elections. However, if you ever have a question or would like to let me know how you feel about a certain issue, or maybe you have an idea for a bill next year, you can still reach me at: 1-800-562-6000

Also, if you'd like to receive an electronic version of my newsletter in the future, just let me know by calling me at the number above.

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Dear Friends in the 11th District,

I am glad to have our 'short' 60 day session over so I can be back in our communities. I think we did a great job this year in Olympia:

- balancing the budget,
- investing in job creation,
- protecting our quality of life,
- working towards health care solutions, and
- reforming education.

We also took great steps forward with

- our transportation budget and ferry problems,
- the health of our communities and kids, and
- investing in higher education.

There is always more to do, but I think we made progress on a number of issues.

As the Majority Floor Leader, a position I was elected to by my Democratic Caucus colleagues, I helped bills move out of the House smoothly, organizing the timing and debate. I also worked hard on a number of groundbreaking bills this year - the RFID bill is the first of its kind in the nation. The Toxic Toys bill, which came through the new Environmental Health committee that I am the top Democrat on, sets the strictest limits on lead, cadmium, and phthalates in children's products. Finally, I was a leader on moving us down the path towards more internet broadband in our state through the Technology, Energy, and Communications committee.

Thank you for letting me serve you in Olympia, and thank you for taking the time to look through this newsletter for details on these bills and more. As always, say hello when you see me on Beacon Hill, in South Park, Georgetown, Benson Hill, Renton and the Highlands, SeaTac, Burien, or Tukwila!

Zack Hudgins
Zack Hudgins



Zack presiding as Speaker during House Floor debate

State Representative
Zack Hudgins
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Important bills passed this year

I work with many other legislators on bills to make sure more issues are being covered. By sharing some of the limelight, we can get more done. Here are some of the bills passed to the governor's desk.

1031 – Morris, Hudgins sponsors

A step towards protecting your privacy when it comes to **RFID chips**. These small chips are placed in all types of items to track them through the supply chain, or to track you through your life. This new law makes it illegal to skim information off these chips without your knowledge.

2647 – Dickerson, Hudgins sponsors

After all the toy recalls this past year we need a new standard for safe toys in our state. This **new law sets the strictest standards** in the country for levels of lead, cadmium, and phthalates. It also starts to create a list and process for tracking other chemicals of high concern.

2261– Campbell, Hudgins sponsors

We need to protect our clean air and make it easier to warn people about wood-smoke burning problems.

2431 – Morris, Hudgins sponsors

Cord blood can be a great source of help to sick people. We now have a process for educating people and promoting the potential of banking cord blood, while establishing guidelines and safeguards for private cord blood banking.

3212 – Santos, Hudgins sponsors

The WASL isn't helpful to students or educators when the data is all thrown together. **This bill breaks the WASL data up** by many subgroups, so we can help kids that aren't getting over the WASL hurdle with better targeted services.

3274 – Simpson, Hudgins sponsors

The Port of Seattle must now follow the guidelines set in the State Auditor's report to better conform to state regulations around contracting out projects. This was one of many Port of Seattle accountability bills I worked on this session.

Requiring that Kids are Tested for Lead Exposure

With all the talk of toxic toys, there was a concern that kids weren't getting tested in our state for lead. Lead can cause many health problems for kids, and can have adverse effects on young, developing brains. For 30 years we have worked to eliminate it from products like paint and gasoline. And the state Department of Health is currently developing a chemical action plan to raise awareness about lead exposure.

Unfortunately, we're not testing many kids in our state because some people believe we don't have the same exposure risk to lead as other places. For many years experts felt the main exposure to children is from lead paint — kids eat paint chips because it has a sweet taste. But there are other exposures now; pesticides, imported candy, imported toys, smelter plumes have poisoned soil. And we've found that certain income, race, ethnicity, and educational backgrounds can sometimes correlate to lead exposure risk.

The idea for a bill came to me from a Head Start program on Beacon Hill in Seattle. It simply tells DSHS to test kids under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment exam guidelines. We don't want to alarm anyone in our communities, but we won't know if lead is a problem for our kids if we aren't testing them. Testing kids will give everyone the data that doesn't exist now.

This bill passed out of the House and over to the Senate, where it passed out of the Health Care committee, Ways and Means Committee and Rules committee. It died on the Floor Calendar in the Senate. Unfortunately, Gov. Gregoire vetoed money in the budget that would have helped educate parents about the risks of lead exposure. It is an issue that I believe is important, though, and I will continue to pursue it next year.

Health Insurance Partnership (HIP) (HB 2537)

We enacted HIP in 2007 to help small businesses offer affordable health insurance to low-wage workers. This legislation reflects several changes recommended by the HIP board to ensure that the program is up and running by March 2009.

"Aging in place" Act (E2SHB 2668): This bill helps elderly and disabled people remain in their chosen home. This includes respite care and training for family members who are caring for disabled or elderly loved ones; training and support for adult family homes and boarding homes caring for persons with behavioral challenges; expansion of a successful falls prevention program for seniors; and authorization for nurses to teach nursing assistants to give insulin injections to people with diabetes living in their own homes, boarding homes, or adult family homes.

Climate Action and Green Jobs (E2SHB 2815)

This legislation creates the framework to grow Washington's green economy. We will identify industry and worker needs in the new green economy, and address their recruitment, education and training needs. HB 2815 also places greenhouse gas emission limits in law, and directs the Department of Ecology to develop a plan to achieve them.



Education is always a high priority for us in the legislature. Here are some of the bills that work on our education system.

Washington Head Start (HB 3168) sets the path toward one, integrated Washington Head Start program by the year 2010 by combining it with the highly successful federal Head Start program.

Career & Technical Education (SB 6377) enhances quality, access, and program expansion for Career and Technical education in secondary schools.

Addressing the WASL (HB 3166) directs the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop end-of-course exams and redesign the WASL.

And in the budget for Education: The 2008 supplemental operating budget adds about \$101 million in additional spending for our state's public schools. Public school employees will see increased salaries in this budget. Voter-approved Initiative 732 requires cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for K-12 employees. In addition, House Democrats fought for additional funding to make up for 732 funding that was not provided in the 2003-05 biennium.

Enhancing campus safety and security (SB 6328) will ensure the collaborative development of policies and procedures for preventing and responding to violent incidents on college campuses while ensuring communication with students, faculty and staff.



House Bill 3104 expands domestic partnership rights and responsibilities, allowing some couples who enter their names on the registry to share bank accounts, property, and other legal protections.

Requiring your consent before the disclosure of your cell number (2SHB 2479) Your private wireless telephone number should be kept private. Terms of this legislation emphasize that a customer's consent would be necessary before any disclosure of your cell-phone number. A successful measure two years ago stops wireless telephone companies from publishing a citizen's phone number in a directory without first getting the citizen's approval. But this year's bill is needed to extend restrictions to halt third parties from sharing these numbers. Enforcement money for this bill was vetoed by the Governor.

Affordable Housing

Washington Families Fund (WFF) (SB 6335) is a highly successful public-private partnership with 18 organizations, which have provided private-sector matching dollars for service-enriched housing for homeless families with children. The \$6 million infusion of state support will help over 1000 people out of homelessness over the next 10 years.

HB 2014 requires landlords to provide tenants with relocation compensation and extends the time period that tenants have to move out to a hundred and twenty days. It also forbids landlords from starting construction during that time. Finally, it allows cities to restrict the number of condominium conversions.



We also passed bills that would make our quality of life better in Washington state. Here is a summary of some of those bills:

Getting tough on sex offenders who fail to register (House Bill 2714) This bill is about making sure our families have important information. The bill boosts the penalty for failing to register to a class B felony. Sex offenders not registering would be subject to longer community-custody sentences and \$20,000 fines.

Criminal street gangs (HB 2712) is the anti-street gang act. It includes funds for prevention, suppression, and intervention of criminal street gang activity, as well as clean up of gang graffiti.



The Public Works Trust Fund (HB 2437) This year 52 projects were approved that will leverage \$546.3 million in investments from local governments, authorized by the Public Works Board. This year's project list is expected to create \$1.9 billion worth of jobs. Bridges, roads, water and sewage systems, and solid waste and recycling facilities are projects eligible for assistance through this program.

Economic and Community Development Projects (2SSB 6855) We strengthened and streamlined our infrastructure grant and loan programs for both economic and community development, which can leverage private investment and create more family-wage jobs.